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FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5693
INFO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA 0001
RUEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 3747
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 5929

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 HO CHI MINH CITY 000338

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/OCS/EAP, DS/IP/EAP; EAP/MLS, EAP/EX
M/PRI FOR (MORRITZ, ROBIN)
SES-O FOR (PARRA, ELIAS), AAIT, OESIHA, MED
HHS FOR OGHA (JKULIKOWSKI, ACUMMING, DMILLER)
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [MG](#) [KFLU](#) [KFLO](#)

KPREL, KSAF, KPAO, ASEC, KSEO, VM

SUBJECT: TFFLU01 HCMC H1N1 INFLUENZA CONTAINMENT MEASURES: PASSENGER
SCREENING, PUBLIC OUTREACH, NO TRAVEL OR PORK IMPORT BANS

REF: A) STATE 41768, B) STATE 6306; C) STATE 67922 AND 67936 [2008]; D. STATE 42349

¶1. (SBU) Summary. As of COB May 6, there have been no confirmed reports of the novel H1N1 influenza A in humans or livestock in Vietnam. As over 70 percent of international arrivals enter the country through HCMC, the virus is expected to make its Vietnam debut here. Authorities state that thermal scanning of international arrivals began April 26, and that procedures to diagnose, quarantine, and treat H1N1 influenza patients are in place. End Summary.

No Confirmed H1N1 Flu Cases in Vietnam

¶2. (SBU) There are no confirmed human cases of H1N1 influenza A in Vietnam and HCMC officials have ruled out several suspected cases using clinical testing. As over 70 percent of international arrivals enter Vietnam through HCMC, the virus is expected to make its Vietnam debut here. Local media reported that on May 3 two Vietnamese children returning from Hong Kong, two Vietnamese Americans, a Dane and an Australian were quarantined after exhibiting high body temperatures detected by thermal scanning upon arrival at HCMC's Tan Son Nhat International Airport. Head of Medical Affairs of the HCMC Department of Health (DOH) Dr. Phan Van Nghiem told ConGen on May 4 that all six had tested negative for H1N1 influenza A and had been discharged.

Media Sounds Influenza Alarm

¶3. (U) Vietnam's major dailies and television outlets are providing extensive daily coverage of the H1N1 influenza outbreaks in Mexico and the United States, and its spread overseas. Most stories conclude with practical tips on identifying symptoms and avoiding flu contagion and urge readers and viewers to seek medical treatment if afflicted. Physicians working in the field are also posting influenza treatment and avoidance guidelines on media websites.

Officials Spread Public Health Info

¶4. (SBU) Human and animal health officials are directing public outreach efforts to educate the general public and swine farmers about H1N1 risks and precautions. Dr. Tu, Head of Department of Microbiology and Immunology, of the HCMC Pasteur Institute, said his organization is conducting outreach training for representatives from provincial preventive medicine centers in southern Vietnam, so that these centers can then effectively educate the public regarding the H1N1 swine flu threat. Deputy Director of the Region VI Animal Health Center Dr. Phuong said the HCMC Department of Animal Health has issued a memorandum to provincial animal health centers under its jurisdiction requiring them to issue H1N1 influenza A guidelines and warnings, urging provincial centers to strengthen monitoring, prevention, and outreach activities. (Note: Region VI encompasses 11 provinces: HCMC, Ba Ria Vung Tau, Dong Nai, Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Tay Ninh, Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan. End Note.)

Incoming International Travelers Screened

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¶5. (SBU) Dr. Hiep from the HCMC International Health Quarantine Center said that Tan Son Nhat airport authorities have been thermally scanning arriving international passengers since April 26, and that health personnel and equipment are on stand-by to screen arriving cruise ship passengers in HCMC and neighboring Ba Ria Vung Tau province. The DOH's Dr. Nghiem told ConGen that incoming passengers must also now fill out declarations describing their recent medical history. No plans are in place to screen overland passengers arriving from Cambodia according to Dr. Hiep.

Diagnosis, Quarantine, Treatment Protocols in Place

¶6. (SBU) Authorities confirm that diagnosis and treatment protocols for passengers suspected of H1N1 infection are in place. According to Dr. Tu, incoming passengers who scan positive or exhibit flu systems will be transferred to HCMC Tropical Disease Hospital for further diagnosis. Both the Pasteur Institute and the HCMC Tropical Disease Hospital (TDH) have the capability to diagnose the H1N1 influenza A virus, but cannot identify the specific subtype of current interest. Dr. Tu expects testing kits with that capability to arrive at the Institute in several days, courtesy of the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Passengers diagnosed with this H1N1 influenza will be quarantined and treated at the TDH, the Pham Ngoc Tuberculosis Hospital or Pediatric Hospitals Numbers One and Two, with the protocol used for H5N1 avian flu cases. Dr. Tu noted that a new treatment protocol specific to H1N1 swine flu will be put in place as soon as it is received from the World Health Organization (WHO). According to HCMC DOH's Dr. Nghiem, the four aforementioned hospitals have two hundred beds available to treat H1N1 cases, with an additional surge capacity of 1000 beds.

No Travel or Treatment Restrictions on Foreigners

¶ 7. (SBU) Dr. Hiep from the HCMC International Health Quarantine Center confirmed that there are no travel restrictions currently in place for passengers from affected areas. Dr. Nghiem noted that no distinction will be made between foreign and Vietnamese patients with respect to treatment of H1N1 infections. (Note: Currently, foreign patients cannot be admitted to the HCMC Tropical Disease Hospital without the permission of high level hospital officials. End Note.)

No Pork Import Restrictions

¶ 8. (SBU) The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and HCMC authorities have told us that the GVN has no plans to ban pork imports. Imported pork is being inspected, and where necessary, quarantined as per usual procedures.

¶ 9. (SBU) Comment: Capacity and experience developed by HCMC authorities in dealing with outbreaks of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza will likely prove useful in preparing for a possible H1N1 influenza A outbreak. HCMC authorities have taken a measured response, preparing for the eventuality of H1N1-infected travelers, but not overstepping into travel or pork importation bans. Interestingly, government efforts also appear to be diffusing quickly into the private sector. On his way to visit the Jabil Circuits Company in an outlying district

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of HCMC, Ambassador Michalak not only passed a large billboard reading "H1N1 Influenza is a Danger to All" but he and his party were thermally scanned before entering the facility. End Comment.

¶ 10. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Hanoi.
FAIRFAX